

FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

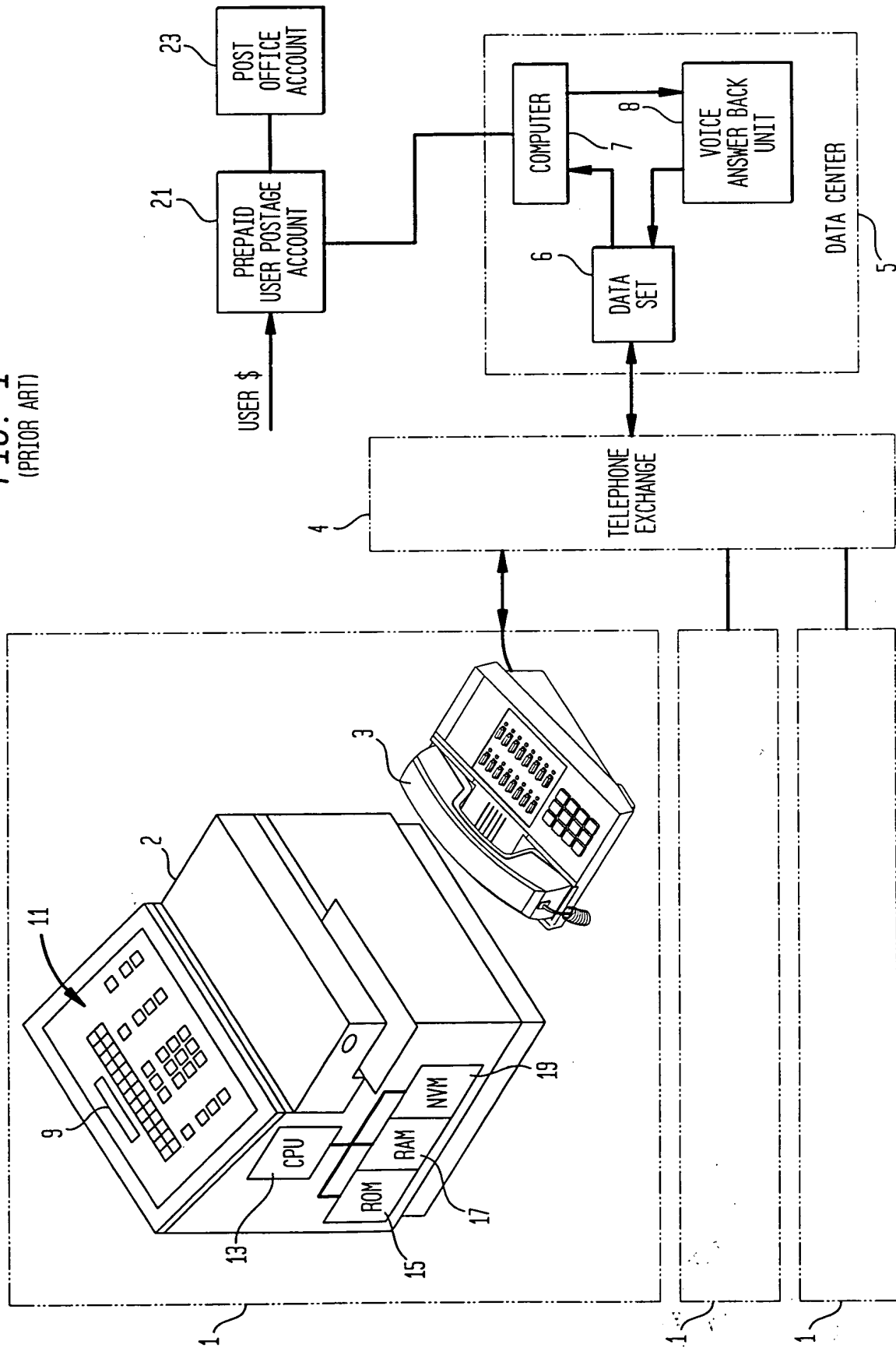


FIG. 2
(PRIOR ART)

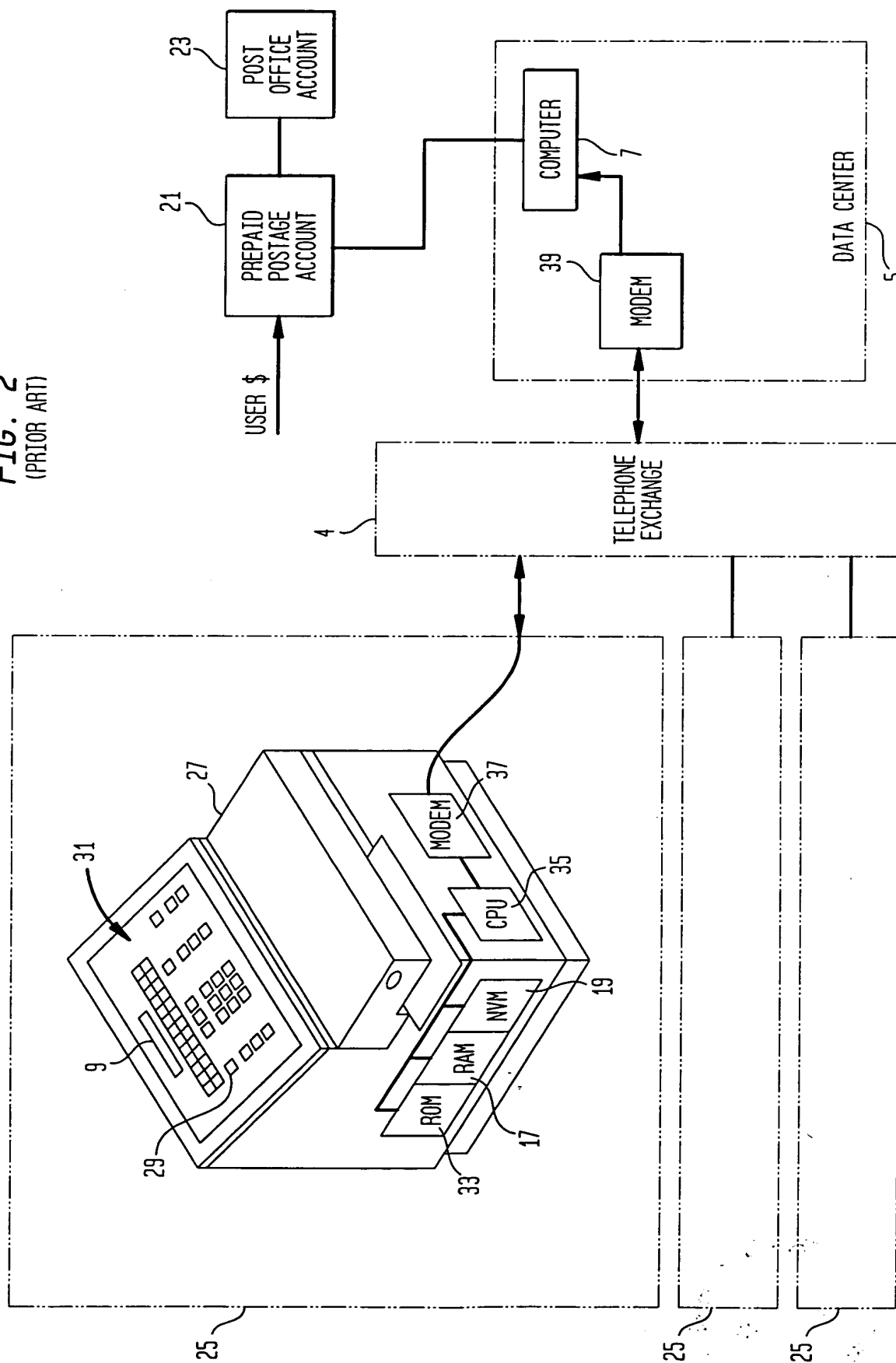


FIG. 3

The diagram illustrates a system architecture for processing prepaid postage accounts. On the left, a user terminal (25) is shown with a monitor (27) and a keyboard (29). The terminal is connected to a central processing unit (17) which includes ROM (19), RAM (21), NVM (23), CPU (35), and a MODEM (37). The terminal is also connected to a TELEPHONE EXCHANGE (4). The TELEPHONE EXCHANGE is connected to a COMPUTER (56) within a DATA CENTER (5). The COMPUTER is connected to a MODEM (39) and a LINE OF CREDIT DATA BASE (57). The COMPUTER is also connected to a CHECK ISSUE FACILITY (82), a BILLING SYSTEM (71), a METER USER (87), a CREDIT CARD COMPANY (83), and a DATA CENTER ACCOUNT (88). The COMPUTER is further connected to a PREPAID POSTAGE ACCOUNT (21) and a POST OFFICE ACCOUNT (23). The PREPAID POSTAGE ACCOUNT is connected to a FAX (104) and an E-MAIL (102). The CHECK ISSUE FACILITY is connected to a FAX (104) and an E-MAIL (102).

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FIG. 4a

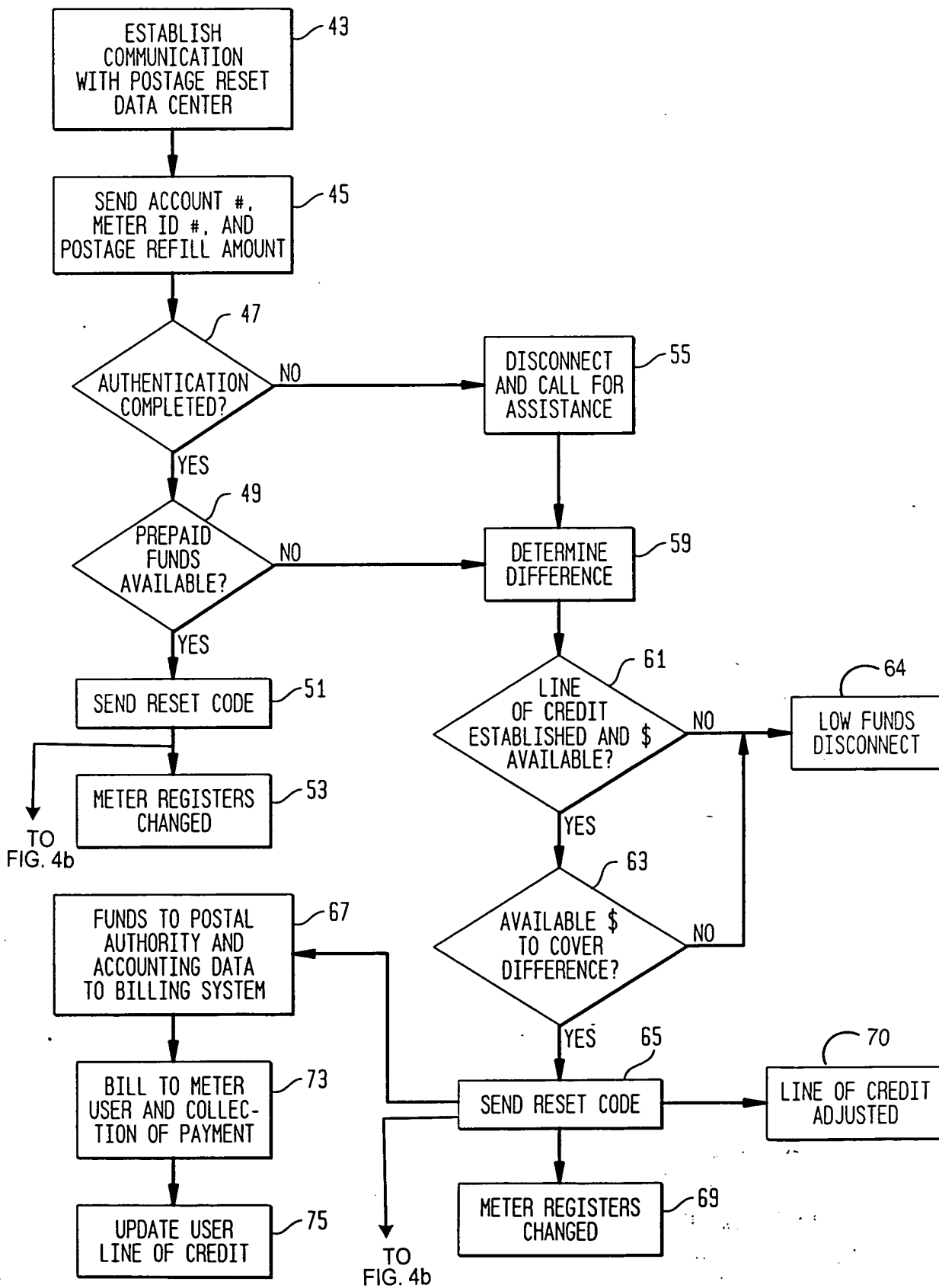


FIG. 4b

